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P O E M S



SMALL TABLEAUX

BY THE

REV. CHARLES TURNER

VICAR OF GRASEY, LINCOLN

Hocce breves, oīo pietor, ne sperne tabellas.

M. S.

96

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
MY FIRST AND LAST STROPHE	3
THE GOLD-CRESTED WREN	4
THE HOLY EMERALD	5
ST. AUGUSTINE AND MONICA	6
NEHEMIAH'S NIGHT RIDE	7
SALOME	8
<i>Continued</i>	9
CHARLOTTE CORDAY	10
WÖLF AND THE CASKET	11
PHILOCTETES	12
<i>Continued</i>	13
ON AN OLD ROMAN SHIELD FOUND IN THE THAMES . .	14
<i>On the Same</i>	15
THE BIER OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER	16
THE ILLUMINATION OF THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH FLEETS AT PORTSMOUTH	17
ON A PICTURE OF ARMIDA AND RINALDO, WITH THE DECOY-NYMPH	18
ART AND FAITH	19
LUCY	20
MARY—A REMINISCENCE	21
<i>Continued</i>	22
MORNING SORROWS	23
MINNIE AND HER DOVE	24

765707

	PAGE
EUSTACE AND EDITH	25
<i>Continued</i> —MAKE-BELIEVE HUNTING	26
THE SCHOOL-BOY'S DREAM ON THE NIGHT BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS	27
THE ROGUE'S NIGHTMARE	28
LITTLE PHŒBE	29
ALICE WADE VERSUS SMALL-POX	30
ELLEN	31
ANNIE AND AMBROSE	32
GOING HOME	33
JEALOUSY	34
THE HALF-RAINBOW	35
THE PARTING-GATE	36
HERO AND LEANDER	37
DROWNED IN THE TROPICS	38
<i>Continued</i> —THE SEA-FAIRIES' ANSWER	39
VIENNA AND IN MEMORIAM	40
To A LITTLE CHILD WHO ASKED FOR A LAUREL CROWN . .	41
<i>Continued</i> —A RECANTATION	42
LITTLE SAMUEL	43
A BRILLIANT DAY	44
THE STARLING	45
NO NIGHTINGALES, OR COMPENSATION	46
THE WOOD-ROSE	47
THE HOME-FIELD. EVENING	48
MAGGIE'S STAR	49
A SUMMER NIGHT IN THE BEEHIVE	50
THE BEE-WISP	51
THE FLY'S LECTURE	52
THE ROOKERY	53

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE
ON A VASE OF GOLD-FISH	54
THE PLEA OF THE SHOT SWALLOW	55
THE LAST SWEEP OF THE SCYTHE	56
HARVEST-HOME	57
THE STORM—A HARVEST MEMORY	58
THE FIRST WEEK IN OCTOBER	59
FROM HARVEST TO JANUARY	60
LAST YEAR'S HARVEST	61
THE STEAM THRESHING MACHINE	62
<i>Continued</i>	63
NOVEMBER SUNSHINE AND THE HOUSE-FLIES	64
THE DRUNKARD'S LAST MARKET	65
THE LATE PASTOR OF WOLDSBY EBRIORUM	66
ON THE ECLIPSE OF THE MOON OF OCTOBER 1865	67
ON AN ANNULAR ECLIPSE OF THE SUN IN A STORM	68
THE MOON AND SIN, AN ILLUSTRATION	69
ORION	70
FANATICISM, A NIGHT SCENE IN THE OPEN AIR	71
MISSING THE METEORS, 1866	72
<i>Continued</i> —A LOOK-OUT FOR THIRTY YEARS	73
THE MOORLAND TREE IN THE GARDEN	74
IN AND OUT OF THE PINE-WOOD	75
SILENT PRAISE	76
A FOREST SUNSET	77
WRITTEN AT THE WOOD-SALE OF MESSRS. BLANK AND Co., NON-RESIDENT PROPRIETORS	78
THE NEEDLES' LIGHTHOUSE FROM KEYHAVEN, HAMPSHIRE	79
DANGER—A PERSONIFICATION	80
A FAREWELL TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT	81
THE WHITE HORSE OF WESTBURY	82

	PAGE
BEAU NASH	83
A PHOTOGRAPH ON THE RED GOLD	84
ON BOARD A JERSEY STEAMER	85
VIE DE JÉSUS	86
POOR HODGE AND THE REV. SANS FOY	87
PRAY, THINK, AND STRIVE	88
THE ÆOLIAN HARP	89
THE OCEAN	90
A SUMMER TWILIGHT	91
THE KISS OF BETROTHAL	92
AN ENGLISH CHURCH	93
A FOREST LAKE	94
JOY CAME FROM HEAVEN	95
THE RAINBOW	96
COLLISION OF THE AYR AND COMET STEAMBOATS	97
SILKWORMS AND SPIDERS	98
PERSEVERANCE	99
MARTIAL ARDOUR IN AGE	100
AUTUMN	101
A CALM EVENING	102
ON A GENIUS OF LOWLY ESTATE	103
ON STARTLING SOME PIGEONS	104
THE BUTTERFLY	105
ON A PICTURE OF THE FATES	106
DECADENCE OF GREECE, 1830	107
A BIRTHDAY	108
To —	109
ON SEEING A CHILD BLUSH ON HIS FIRST VIEW OF A CORPSE	110
O GOD, IMPART THY BLESSING TO MY CRIES	111
NOTES	113

SMALL TABLEAUX.

*MY FIRST AND LAST STROPHE.**On being asked to write an Ode by a Friend.*

Dear friend ! I had commenced the ‘soaring ode’—
But oh ! I felt, despite thy flattering talk,
Like some poor sparrow, captured by a hawk,
And borne on alien wings from his abode
Beneath the sheltering eaves. It is an art
Beyond my scope and pitch ; I stare and pant
In this Pindaric clutch, and feel my want
Of force ; henceforth I shall grow faint at heart
To see a falcon tower. Let lyrics be ;
For, though I do not love to say thee nay,
For my poor muse it is too late a day
To merr with strophe and antistrophe !
When odes are paramount, ‘tis best for me
To house and peep, lest I be swooped away.

*THE GOLD-CRESTED WREN.**His relation to the Sonnet.*

When my hand closed upon thee, worn and spent
With idly dashing on the window-pane,
Or clinging to the cornice—I, that meant
At once to free thee, could not but detain ;
I dropt my pen, I left th' unfinished lay,
To give thee back to freedom ; but I took—
Oh, charm of sweet occasion !—one brief look
At thy bright eyes and innocent dismay ;
Then forth I sent thee on thy homeward quest,
My lesson learnt—thy beauty got by heart :
And if, at times, my sonnet-muse would rest
Short of her topmost skill, her little best,
The memory of thy delicate gold crest
Shall plead for one last touch,—the crown of Art.

THE HOLY EMERALD

Said to be the only true likeness of Christ.

The gem, to which the artist did entrust
That Face which now outshines the Cherubim,
Gave up, full willingly, its emerald dust,
To take Christ's likeness, to make room for Him.
So must it be, if thou wouldest bear about
Thy Lord—thy shining surface must be lowered,
Thy goodly prominence be chipt and scored,
Till those deep scars have brought His features out :
Sharp be the stroke and true, make no complaints ;
For heavenly lines thou givest earthy grit :
But oh ! how oft our coward spirit faints,
When we are called our jewels to submit
To this keen graver, which so oft hath writ
The Saviour's image on His wounded saints !

ST. AUGUSTINE AND MONICA.

When Monica's young son had felt her kiss—
Her weeping kiss—for years, her sorrow flowed
At last into his wilful blood ; he owed
To her his after-life of truth and bliss :
And her own joy, what words, what thoughts could paint !
When o'er his soul, with sweet constraining force,
Came Penitence—a fusion from remorse—
And made her boy a glorious Christian saint.
Oh ye, who tend the young through doubtful years
Along the busy path from birth to death,
Parents and friends ! forget not in your fears
The secret strength of prayer, the holy breath
That swathes your darlings ; think how Austin's faith
Rose like a star upon his mother's tears !

NEHEMIAH'S NIGHT RIDE.

When Nehemiah rode into the dark,
And stones of ruin cumbered his advance,
And old localities were hard to mark,
Methinks he spent some moments in a trance
Of sounds from past and future—Abraham's foot
With Isaac's on Moriah; then the sigh
Of Moses, beyond Jordan doomed to die,
So near the soil wherein his heart had root:
‘Ay!’ thought he, ‘and my own fond suit was met
By earthly and by heavenly sympathy! ’
Then came sweet tones from far Gennesaret,
A splash, as from the casting of a net,
The noise as of a Cross grounded and set
Hard by him, and a loud and lonely cry!

SALOME.

How little didst thou think, while tripping down
To meet Herodias, from that wild carouse,
That thou shouldst win such terrible renown,
And men should name thy name with heavy brows !
For, in the fierce light of thy mother's guilt,
Before the nations thou art dancing still
Up to the wine-cups ! Holy life was spilt,
And thy fair girlhood served a murderous will :
And so thou fillest up th' historic page
With the keen Scribe and ruthless Pharisee,
And, linked with all the furies of the age,
Hast found no pitying heart to plead for thee ;
For, lo ! thy dancing-dress is bloody-red,
And thy young hands have borne John Baptist's head !

Continued.

But didst thou not relent? our pity asks ;
Didst thou not shudder at that daring deed ?
Though voices from the flagons and the flasks
Bade thee and the slain prophet's head good speed
To the Queen's chamber ? Herod rued his oath,
And shuddered in the net his hands had drawn
About himself, and wished his vow unsworn :
And was the tender maiden nothing loth
To lend herself to that foul deed of hate,
Whose issue is the world's eternal blame ?
Didst thou not rather bend, in silent shame,
O'er the cold lips, so eloquent of late,
From which the breath of holy anger came
As pure as the wild honey which he ate ?

*CHARLOTTE CORDAY,**A Memoir of a Hand.*

A child's small hand, lost in her father's—twined
In springtide round the stems of earliest flowers,
Which she had found in fields and orchard-bowers,
With earnest eyes, that best deserve to find ;
A woman's hand—whose pulses ever glowed
With eager purpose, running bolder blood
Than childhood's ; though the loving teardrops flowed
Whene'er she clasped in dreams her country's good :
An arm'd hand ! fresh from the stricken throat
Of that fierce homicide, whose rage of heart
Woke counter-rage, that came and saw and smote ;
Ah ! maiden's hand ! blood-stained at last ! thou art
The very symbol of th' unnatural time
When Norman Charlotte dared her noble crime.

*WÖLF AND THE CASKET,**Or the Unity of the Iliad.*

Though Wölf, in hypercritic zeal, insists *
On breaking up that old Ionian harp,
And parcels out to many melodists
The Chian's lonely fame,—he cannot warp
Our common sense, pervert our natural taste ;
Great Aristotle, and that warrior-youth
Of old, held simpler views of Epeic truth ;
Master and pupil felt his unity ;
And, when the monarch in his casket placed
The roll, the verdict of a world he took :
In truth, a plural Homer cannot be !
One Muse maintains the quarrels and the loves,
One ardent voice, like Heaven-sent Ossa, moves
The war from fight to fight, from book to book.

PHILOCTETES.

Silent they gaze from Ilion's battlements—
Yon sail to-day has brought her latest foe ;
Silent they gaze upon the plain below,
And hear glad voices from the Grecian tents :
Not now Achilles, shouting from the trench,
Dismays them—but that friend of Hercules,
Armed with the Hydra's blood to fight for Greece,
Though once deported for his rueful stench ;
The cruel shafts will soon be on the wing,
So brief is that beleaguered city's span ;
The leech has gone to that ill-savour'd man :
The foot of Philoctetes yearns to spring
Like young Protesilaüs ! Troy hath learned
Her fate,—the ten-years' exile hath returned !

Continued.

PHILOCTETES.

Onward the fatal hours and minutes steal,
To-morrow shall his archery commence,
And Troy's proud walls be left without defence,
Open and mortal as Achilles' heel :
To-morrow that old suitor shall exact
Grim vengeance, now for ten years overdue—
For Meneläus and CEnone too--
Th' adulterer shall be slain—the city sackt :
Night falls—The mighty bow lies still on board,
And dips and rises with the heaving wave :
The ship-light flickers on that thirsty hoard
Of arrows, which the twelve-fold labourer gave ;
The night-watch halts beside it, pondering all
The dreadful purport of his chief's recall.

*ON AN OLD ROMAN SHIELD FOUND IN
THE THAMES.*

Drowned for long ages, lost to human reach,
At last the Roman buckler reappears,
And makes an old-world clang upon the beach,
Its first faint voice for many a hundred years ;
Not the weird noises on the battle-field
Of Marathon, as thrilling legends tell,
Could speak more sadly than this ancient shield,
As ringing at the fisher's feet it fell.

How cam'st thou to be grappled thus, and hauled
To shore, when other prey was sought, not thou ?
How strangely was thy long-lost chime recalled,
As when the arrows struck thee ! Then, as now,
The tented plain was thronged with armèd men ;
Our weapons change, we quarrel now as then !

ON THE SAME.

He drew it home—he heaved it to the bank—
No modern waif, but an old Roman targe ;
The mild familiar swan in terror shrank
From the rude splash, and left the weltering marge.
Low rang the iron boss ; the fisher stared
At his new capture, while, in mystic tones,
The lost shield called its legion, whose death-groans
And clash of onset it had seen and heard.
Oh ! when shall better thoughts be dear to man,
Than rapine and ambition, fraud and hate ?
Oh ! when shall War, like this old buckler, fall
Into disuse, drowned by its own dead weight ?
And Commerce, buoyant as the living swan,
Push boldly to the shore, the friend of all ?

THE BIER OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER.

When first the blackthorn blossomed, thou wast brave
And strong, but April left thee faint and sick ;
The May-wasp dipt into thine open grave,
And struck the velvets of thy hearse—so quick
Thy summons came. Disease and languor stole
The pulses of thy young heroic hands ;
But thou didst ever bow to Heaven's commands,
And so the act of dying made thy soul
An instant guest in Paradise ! How calm
And still lay those brave hands, which ever yearned
For prayer, yet never from the combat turned !
Though sundered for dispatch of martial deeds,
Each with its weapon, serving fiery needs,
They longed to press each other, palm to palm.

*THE ILLUMINATION OF THE ENGLISH AND
FRENCH FLEETS AT PORTSMOUTH.*

Thanks to those festal fires ! mankind shall be
All brothers now ! since France and England met.
The far-seen glow of their great amity
Hangs on the world's horizons : they have set
A glorious fashion ! On th' illumined flood
Their two great navies, like some mighty raft,
Rode in their oneness ; without spleen or craft,
They met in light—God saw that it was good ;
And, oh ! those long-drawn rockets, how they climbed,
To fill the very heaven with tricolors !
What healths we drank, by booming cannon timed !
And how the city swarmed from all her doors
To greet the Frenchman on our English shores !
And how the bells of welcome pealed and chimed !

*ON A PICTURE OF ARMIDA AND RINALDO,
WITH THE DECOY-NYMPH.*

Dear is that picture for my childhood's sake,—
The man asleep, so near 'to love or harm ;
The wingèd boy, that stays Armida's arm,
The siren-girl, all-hushed, lest he awake ;
While, in the background of that pictured tale,
Sown with enchanted herbs, and clad with gloom,
A sombre eminence o'erlooks the vale,
A purple hill, where all my dreams found room :
'Tis strange, with how few touches of a brush,
That painter's hand supplied, in life's fresh morn,
The mystic thoughts I loved ! Sweet thoughts ! deep-drawn
Far-destined ; cherished still without a blush ;
Deep-drawn—from God's own founts of mystery ;
Far-destined—for my soul must ever be.

ART AND FAITH.

When first I home returned, and took my part
Once more in rural duties, I had brought
A memory stored with forms of ancient art,
And faithful visions kept them in my thought;
Day after day Apollo stretched his arm,
And gazed in triumph, o'er our village road;
While Fancy heard, aloof, the noise of harm,
That reached the Python from the Archer-god.
Let me not leave thee, O my Lord, for these,
Nor merge in Art my Christian fealty!
Through all the winsome sculptures of old Greece
Keep Thou an open walk for Thee and me!
No whiteness is like Thine, All-pure and good!
No marble weighs against Thy precious Blood.

LUCY.

The sculptor carves the stone, till he beholds
Its lessening bulk his finer thought fulfil;
The flesh and blood our heavenly Artist moulds,
Waxed fuller, while He wrought it fairer still,
As Lucy grew to woman. Not a girl
In all the village wore her gracious look:
But each her dear pre-eminence could brook,
Nor wished a duller gloss on the least curl
Of her bright auburn hair. Love came to woo
In humblest guise, yet no coquettish guile
Depraved the honest beauty of her smile;
Her goodness raised and bettered those who drew
The lot of the rejected, for they knew
Her utter truth and sweetness all the while!

MARY—A REMINISCENCE.

She died in June, while yet the woodbine sprays
Waved o'er the outlet of this garden-dell;
Before the advent of these Autumn days
And dark unblossomed verdure. As befel,
I from my window gazed, yearning to forge
Some comfort out of anguish so forlorn:
The dull rain streamed before the bloomless gorge,
By which, erewhile, on each less genial morn,
Our Mary passed, to gain her sheltered lawn,
With Death's disastrous rose upon her cheek.
How often had I watched her, pale and meek,
Pacing the sward! and now I daily seek
The track, by those slow pausing footsteps worn,
How faintly worn! though trodden week by week.

Continued.

And when I seek the chamber where she dwelt,
Near one loved chair a well-worn spot I see,
Worn by the shifting of a feeble knee
While the poor head bowed lowly—it would melt
The worldling's heart with instant sympathy :
The match-box and the manual, lying there,
Those sad sweet signs of wakefulness and prayer,
Are darling tokens of the Past to me ;
The little rasping sound of taper lit
At midnight, which aroused her slumbering bird :
The motion of her languid frame that stirred
For ease in some new posture—tho' a word
Perchance, of sudden anguish, followed it ; . .
All this how often had I seen and heard !

MORNING SORROWS.

Sad memory wakes anew at morning's touch
And, as some muscles move without our will,
She seizes, with involuntary clutch,
The sorrow that we hate, our bosom ill :
But we are formed with such fine wisdom, such
A Providence our moral need supplies,
That we can seldom overrate our sighs
Nor prize our organs of regret too much ;
Then welcome still these ever-new returns
Of anguish ! Who escapes or can escape
The burthen, while the great world sins and mourns ?
Grief comes to all, whatever be her shape
To each, but we are framed with pain to cope ;
And, when we bow, we help our climbing hope.

MINNIE AND HER DOVE.

Two days she missed her dove, and then, alas !
A knot of soft gray feathers met her view,
So light, their stirring hardly broke the dew
That hung on the blue violets and the grass ;
A kite had struck her fondling as he passed ;
And o'er that fleeting, downy, epitaph
The poor child lingered, weeping ; her gay laugh
Was mute that day, her little heart o'ercast.
Ah ! Minnie, if thou livest, thou wilt prove
Intenser pangs—less tearful, though less brief ;
Thou'l^t weep for dearer death and sweeter love,
And spiritual woe, of woes the chief,
Until the full-grown wings of human grief
Eclipse thy memory of the kite and dove.

*EUSTACE AND EDITH,**Or the old Rocking-horse.*

Poor rocking-horse ! Eustace, and Edith too,
Mount living steeds : she leans her dainty whip
Across thy smooth-worn flank, and feels thee dip
Beneath the pressure, while she dons a shoe,
Or lifts a glove, and thinks ‘ My childhood’s gone ! ’
While the young statesman, with high hopes possest,
Lays a light hand upon thy yielding crest,
And rocks thee vacantly and passes on.
Yet they both love thee—nor would either brook
Thine absence from this hall, tho’ other aims
And interests have supplanted thy mute claims,
And thou must be content with casual look
From those, who sought thee once with earnest will,
And galloped thee with all their might and skill.

Continued.

MAKE-BELIEVE HUNTING.

How often, when the Meet was at the hall,
Those babes took horse, and, in their joy and pride,
Drew half the coverts of the country side ;
Sweet innocents ! for little Spot was all
Their kennel ; hapless Reynard never knew
How wide a field his enemies embraced,
How both in fact and fancy he was chased,
And what that staunch old rocking-horse could do !
Oh ! give him kindly greeting, man and maid,
And pat him, as you pass, with friendly hands,
In that dim window where disused he stands,
While o'er him breaks the limewalk's flickering shade ;
No provender, no mate, no groom, has he—
His stall and pasture is your memory.

*THE SCHOOL-BOY'S DREAM ON THE NIGHT
BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS.*

'Twas the half-year's last day, a festal one :
Light tasks and feast and sport, hoop, cricket, kite,
Employed us fully, till the summer-night
Stole o'er the roofs of happy Alderton.

Homer indoors, and field-games out of school,
Made medley of my dreams ; for, when I slept,
The quaintest vision o'er my fancy swept,
That ever served the lordship of misrule :
Our hoops through gods and heroes ran a-muck ;
Our kites o'erhung the fleet, a public gaze !
And one wild ball the great Achilles struck—
Oh ! how he towered and lightened at the stroke !
But, tho' his formal pardon I bespoke,
I told him plainly 'twas our holidays.

THE ROGUE'S NIGHTMARE.

One who, the self-same morning, had decoyed
The widow and her son with glozing talk,
At eve through springing pastures walked abroad,
And, after his poor sort, enjoyed his walk.
That night he dreamed : fresh flowers and April grass
Smothered his cruel pen ; the white lamb kneeled
Upon his crafty parchments, signed and sealed
By victim hands ; a babbling stream did pass
Sheer through those written wiles, till that base ink,
Which robbed the widow's mite, the orphan's dole,
Lost colour. But that dream-begotten blink
Of damage waked at once his mammon-soul ;
From his keen glance all vernal tokens shrink
While Fraud and Twilight watch the lying scroll.

*LITTLE PHŒBE,**Or the second gathering of the Sea-shells.*

The rain had poured all day, but cleared at night,
When, with her little basket on her arm,
She left the door-step of that seaside farm ;
The weeping tamarisk glistened in the light,
And chanticleer's green feathers softly waved
Against the dying sunshine. Forth she fared,
Our host's sweet child, his Phœbe golden-haired,
To gather shells, wherewith the beach was paved ;
At dusk, she took the homeward path that led
Beneath yon dark-blue ridge, when, sad to tell,
On her fair head the gloomy Lias fell,
Crumbled by storms,—they found her bruised and dead :
Her basket-store was scattered by the fall,
But loving hands replaced and kept them all.

ALICE WADE VERSUS SMALL-POX.

Thy golden hair is left—its silky mesh
The spoiler shall not mar, whate'er he takes ;
Nor that still-brilliant eye, that sleeps and wakes
Among the flowing sores : but thy fair flesh,
All-confluent now, and molten by disease,
Must keep the stamp which this sick fortnight gave,
Even till that latest fusion in the grave
Runs off our ingrained evils ; but for these
Sweet relics of thyself, and what thou wert
A brief moon since, I should be half afraid
That Love might shrink, and merry Hymen flirt
His robe at thy lost hopes, my little maid !
Thou smilest ! Ah ! I see no power can hurt
The fortunes or the loves of Alice Wade !

*ELLEN,**Or First Love and Death.*

That summer dawn, to Love and Edwin dear,
Her sky-blue gown, her happy tears and smiles ;
And the broad harvests, stirring far and near,
And softly floating to the gates and stiles ;
The meadow sweet and wild rose dew-besprent,
And her pure words of troth, where are they now ?
And the gay lark, that rose at once, and spent
His morning-music on her earliest vow ?
He treads the sodden grass with weary foot
At twilight, weeping for his promised bride :
The wind blows cold ; the corn has long been cut ;
And, three moons since, his plighted Ellen died !
But lo ! that glimmer in the watery rut !
It is a star—in Heaven, yet by his side.

*ANNIE AND AMBROSE,**Or a Winter-Grove with a Summer-Memory.*

Seldom we see such crude cold winter times ;
Yon sooty patch upon the snow-clad weald—
Is that, indeed, the bower of honied limes ?
The balm-grove, where a ten-years' wound was healed ?
Where Annie sat with Ambrose ? where she tried
A cure more sweet than Gilead's pharmacy ?
And did she read him his rich destiny
In that dark holt that blurs the white hill-side ?
The brook, I trow, is bound in frosty bands,
Where Rover plashed, and, venting merry tones,
Trod in the summer-light that swam the sands ;
While, sportive in their bliss, those plighted ones
Confused his eager ear with dropping stones,
But evermore reclasped their happy hands.

*GOING HOME,**Or a Death in the Thebaid.*

The ancient river glimmered in its bed,
High overhead the stars of Egypt burned,
When our slow-dying Edith joined the dead ;
She whom the Arab and the Nubian mourned :
How in the shadow of old Thebes we wept,
And down the long-drawn Nile from day to day !
Her sweet face gone—her bright hair hid away—
Save what the ring or gleaming locket kept ;
And, when we felt the Midland waters rise
Beneath our keel, and England nearer come—
'Mid our forecasting questions and replies,
Back came the sorrow like a sad surprise ;
Those dear white cliff's would never greet her eyes
Nor her cheek flush, to find herself at home.

JEALOUSY.

Alas ! sad Jealousy ! the scalding tear
Drops on her hands—her brow aches sadly too ;
This morn she wandered half the country through,
Weeping, with those false eyes for ever near :
She, who looked boldly in the front of Love,
And searched his glittering face, so proud and fair,
Must droop her gaze, declining from above,
And clasp his feet, and shed her sorrows there :
Or, like some aged lazarus must she lie,
Some palsied crone, who hath no voice but tears—
Who sees the long-expected leech pass by
Her couch, to whisper hope in younger ears ;
And her heart trembles, dying, yet astir;
She knows the healer can do nought for her !

THE HALF-RAINBOW.

The groups of Autumn flowers were all ablaze ;
The hollyhock and scarlet crane's-bill burned
Like merry household fires ; but when he turned
To search the distance, all was blocked with haze :
Then came a brightness over rick and roof ;
He gladdened, as the running sunshine laughed
Its way from sheaf to sheaf, while, high aloof,
The rainbow lingered in one glorious shaft ;
Then, in that light of promise, he appealed
To her who was his heart's best hope ; she heard
The tender suit his trembling lips preferred,
And in imperfect words her love revealed ;
Her faltering accents gave a pledge divine,
Like Heaven's half-bow, a true tho' broken sign.

THE PARTING-GATE.

In that old beech-walk, now bestrewn with mast,
And roaring loud—they lingered long and late;
Harsh was the clang of the last homeward gate
That latch'd itself behind them, as they pass'd—
Then kissed and parted. Soon her funeral knell
Tolled from a foreign clime; he did not talk
Nor weep, but shuddered at that stern farewell;
'Twas the last gate in all their lovers'-walk
Without the kiss beyond it! Was it good
To leave him thus, alone with his sad mood,
In that dear footpath, haunted by her smile?
Where they had laughed and loitered, sat and stood?
Alone in life! alone in Moreham wood!
Through all that sweet, forsaken, forest-mile!

*HERO AND LEANDER,**Or the Boy's Hellespont.*

No colder local records did I crave,
Two lovers' names were all my Hellespont ;
How oft, methought, the swimming youth was wont
To kiss the waters, where the lighted wave
Came trembling out from Sestos ! When the gale
Dimmed his fond eyes, and chilled each supple limb,
I broke my heart for both, without avail,
I wept with her ! I sobbed and sank with him !
And if, at times, th' historic muse would fill
The strait with forms more secular and vast,
The torch of Hero lived behind them still !
And wide-spread sails of war ran glowing past
Love's watch-fire, till, again, th' impassioned light
Burst on the lonely swimmer, doubly bright.

*DROWNED IN THE TROPICS.**The Mother's Questions.*

Drowned, say you? Tell me, tell me, how she fares,
My drowned one? Has she met the finny shoal?
And rolled into that glancing march of theirs
Her attitudes of death, with no control
Of living will? Perchance, her feeble form
Falters about wild headlands in the dark,
Where no expectant mother's voice bids 'Hark!
'Tis our own Mary!' Or the tropic storm,
With its fierce lightning rends her lonely face;
Or waterspouts, with writhing motion, suck
At her dear relics; prey-birds bless their luck
To find her; or the shark and sea-dog trace
From far my fair-eyed fondling—cruel chase
After a helpless prey, already struck!

Continued.

THE SEA-FAIRIES' ANSWER.

Our spells shall keep her floating, yet unchanged;
The nautilus shall push his purple sail
Across her happy shadow; in the gale
The storm-blown land-bird, which too far hath ranged,
Shall trust her look, and perch, and close his eye:
Around her shall the graceful proas move,
And fling their garland-gifts of awe and love;
And, when the tropic midnight veils the sky,
On fair phosphoric seas thy child shall rest.
And morn shall find her, when the day comes back,
Laid, as in Heaven's own river, in the track
Of sunrise o'er the waters—to suggest
In symbol, that her soul is pure and blest,
And floats from light to light, and cannot die.

VIENNA AND IN MEMORIAM.

Roused by the war-note, in review I passed
The polities of nations—their intrigues—
Their long-drawn wars and hates—their loves and
leagues ;

But when I came on sad Vienna, last,
Her scroll of annals, timidly unrolled,
Ran backward from my helpless hands ! the woe
Of that one hour that laid our Arthur low,
Made all her chronicle look blank and cold :

Then turned I to that Book of memory,
Which is to grieving hearts like the sweet south
To the parched meadow, or the dying tree ;
Which fills with elegy the craving mouth
Of sorrow—slakes with song her piteous drouth,
And leaves her calm, though weeping silently !

*TO A LITTLE CHILD WHO ASKED FOR A
LAUREL CROWN.*

The laurels with their heritage of light,
So thickly planted in our garden-ground,
Like thee, in winter time make all things bright,
And strike each other with a cheery sound.

Well, then ! Of these a garland shall be made
Just for the nonce, for they are fresh and green ;
But soon a gayer coronal I'll braid,
When Summer comes to match thy merry mien :
Woodbine and jessamine shall then enclose
Thy fair young head, well woven with choicest art ;
And many a sprig of verdure interpose,
And pinks and rich carnations bear their part,
White lilies, and the hollow balmy rose,
And pansy, with the day-spring at her heart.

To the same little Child.

A RECANTATION.

The conqueror's chaplet doth not suit at all
Those girlish azure orbs, and tresses' flow :
Above—the victor wreath of ravaged Gaul—
The fairy-land of thy sweet face below,
Unscathed and clear ! Ill fancy ! that I wrought
A garland for thee of such stern device ;
I made a monster, Katie, when I brought
The Cæsar's shadow o'er thy sunny eyes ;
But I must kiss thee, darling, all the same ;
What, peevish ! and this one brief kiss my dole !
Well—as it seems but half a kiss I stole,
Now thou art but half Katie, I will claim
The other half when thou art Katie whole,
Uncrost by martial hints and Roman fame.

*LITTLE SAMUEL,**Or Light and Gloom by the Fireside.*

These changes at our weather-wisdom mock ;
But yesterday, the lord of all the year
Upon the front of this white marble clock
Sat like a star of honour, keen and clear,
Small as a spark : to-day, the mantelshelf
And time-piece mirror not his living beams ;
Nought but wan window-lights and pallid gleams,
Where burned, in miniature, the Sun himself !
Then frost, now cloudy thaw. In gilded coat
Above the clock, the infant Samuel kneels ;
In shine or shade, or when the thunder peals,
He lifts his praying hands and murmurs not :
Oh ! may such holy temper be my lot,
Whatever mood each passing day reveals !

A BRILLIANT DAY.

O keen pellucid air ! nothing can lurk
Or disavow itself on this bright day ;
The small rain-plashes shine from far away,
The tiny emmet glitters at his work ;
The bee looks blithe and gay, and as she plies
Her task, and moves and sidles round the cup
Of this spring flower, to drink its honey up,
Her glassy wings, like oars that dip and rise,
Gleam momentarily. Pure-bosomed, clear of fog,
The long lake glistens, while the glorious beam
Bespangles the wet joints and floating leaves
Of water-plants, whose every point receives
His light ; and jellies of the spawning frog,
Unmarked before, like piles of jewels seem !

*THE STARLING,**Or Nest-talk and Fear-talk.*

Poor bird ! why with such energy reprove
My presence ? why that tone which pines and grieves ?
At early dawn, thy sweet voice from the eaves
Hath gone between us oft, a voice of love,
A bond of peace. Why should I ever plot
Thy ruin, or thy fond affections baulk ?
Dost thou not send me down thy happy talk
Even to my pillow, though thou seest me not ?
How should I harm thee ? yet thy timid eye
Is on me, and a harsh rebuke succeeds ;
Not like the tender brooding note that pleads
Thy cause so well, so all-unconsciously ;
Yet shall to-morrow's dawning hear thy strain
Renewed, and knit our indoor bond again.

NO NIGHTINGALES, OR COMPENSATION.

Night of 31st of May.

Long time I waited for the nightingale,
Befooled by that dumb coppice ; till the dove
And finch descried me watching in the grove,
Poor client of the darkness, worn and pale :
But oh ! how often is our frustrate hope
Exchanged by Heaven for unexpected mirth !
Though baulked and sleepless, yet I could not mope
'Mid the full matins of the awakened earth ;
Bold chanticleer, alighting from his perch,
'The night birds play thee false,' he said—and crowed ;
' Welcome to truth and day ! ' The lark uprode
And carolled. Thus, amid my weary search
For song in bowers of silence, June was born,
And tuneless night exchanged for choral morn.

THE WOOD-ROSE.

When Wordsworth found those beds of daffodil
Beside the lake, a pleasant sight he saw ;
I came upon a sweetbriar near a rill,
In all its summer bloom, without a flaw :
The set of all its flowers my thought recalls,
And how they took the wind with easy grace ;
They rode their arches, shook their coronals,
And stirred their streamers o'er the water's face.
And oh ! to watch those azure demoiselles
Glimpsing about the rosy sprays, that dipt
Among the weeds,—how daintily equipt
They were ! how pure their blue against the pink !
Light, flitting forms, that haunt our ponds and wells,
Seen, lost and seen, along the reedy brink.

THE HOME-FIELD. EVENING.

'Tis sweet, when slanting light the field adorns,
To see the new-shorn flocks recline or browse ;
While swallows flit among the restful cows,
Their gurgling dew-laps, and their harmless horns ;
Or flirt the aged hunter, in his dose,
With passing wing ; yet with no thought to grieve
His mild, unjealous, innocent repose,
With those keen contrasts our sad hearts conceive.
And then, perchance, the evening wind awakes
With sudden tumult, and the bowery ash
Goes storming o'er the golden moon, whose flash
Fills and refills its breezy gaps and breaks ;
The weeping willow at her neighbour floats,
And busy rustlings stir the wheat and oats.

MAGGIE'S STAR.

To the White Star on the forehead of a favourite old Mare.

White star ! that travellest at old Maggie's pace
About my field, where'er a wandering mouth,
And foot, that slowly shifts from place to place,
Conduct thee,—East or West, or North or South ;
A loving eye is my best chart to find
Thy whereabouts at dawn or dusk ; but when
She dreams at noon, with heel a-tilt behind,
And pendent lip, I mark thee fairest then ;
I see thee dip and vanish, when she rolls
On earth, supine ; then with one rousing shake
Reculminate ; but, most, thou lov'st to take
A quiet onward course—Heaven's law controls
The mild, progressive motion thou dost make,
Albeit thy path is scarce above the mole's.

A SUMMER NIGHT IN THE BEEHIVE.

The little bee returns with evening's gloom,
To join her comrades in the braided hive,
Where, housed beside their mighty honeycomb,
They dream their polity shall long survive.

Still falls the summer night—the browsing horse
Fills the low portal with a grassy sound
From the near paddock, while the water-course
Sends them sweet murmurs from the meadow-ground : · ·
None but such peaceful noises break the hush,
Save Pussy, growling, in the thyme and sage,
Over the thievish mouse, in happy rage :

At last, the flowers against the threshold brush
In morning airs—fair shines the uprisen sun,
Another day of honey has begun !

THE BEE-WISP.

Our window-panes enthral our summer bees ;
(To insect woes I give this little page)—
We hear them threshing in their idle rage
Those crystal floors of famine, while, at ease,
Their outdoor comrades probe the nectaries
Of flowers, and into all sweet blossoms dive ;
Then home, at sundown, to the happy hive,
On forward wing, straight through the dancing flies :
For such poor strays a full-plumed wisp I keep,
And when I see them pining, worn, and vexed,
I brush them softly with a downward sweep
To the raised sash—all-angered and perplexed :
So man, the insect, stands on his defence
Against the very hand of Providence.

THE FLY'S LECTURE.

Once on a time, when, tempted to repine,
In yon green nook I nursed a sullen theme,
A fly lit near me, lovelier than a dream,
With burnished plates of sight, and pennons fine :
His wondrous beauty struck and fixt my view,
As, ere he mingled with the shades of eve,
With silent feet he trod the honeydew,
In that lone spot, where I had come to grieve :
And still, whene'er the hour of sorrow brings,
Once more, the humours and the doubts of grief,
In my mind's eye, from that moist forest-leaf
Once more I see the glorious insect rise !
My faith is lifted on two gauzy wings,
And served with light by two metallic eyes.

THE ROOKERY.

Methought, as I beheld the rookery pass
Homeward at dusk upon the rising wind,
How every heart in that close-flying mass
Was well befriended by th' Almighty mind :
He marks each sable wing that soars or drops,
He sees them forth at morning to their fare,
He sets them floating on His evening air,
He sends them home to rest on the tree-tops :
And when through umbered leaves the night-winds pour
With lusty impulse rocking all the grove—
The stress is measured by an eye of love,
No root is burst, though all the branches roar ;
And, in the morning, cheerly as before,
The dark clan talks, the social instincts move.

ON A VASE OF GOLD-FISH.

The tortured mullet served the Roman's pride
By darting round the crystal vase, whose heat
Ensured his woe and beauty till he died :
These unharmed gold-fish yield as rich a treat ;
Seen thus, in parlour-twilight, they appear
As though the hand of Midas, hovering o'er,
Wrought on the waters, as his touch drew near,
And set them glancing with his golden power,
The flash of transmutation ! In their glass
They float and glitter, by no anguish rackt ;
And, though we see them swelling as they pass,
'Tis but a painless and phantasmal act,
The trick of their own bellying walls, which charms
All eyes—themselves it vexes not, nor harms.

THE PLEA OF THE SHOT SWALLOW.

In Teos once, bedewed with odours fine,
The happy dove slept on his master's lyre ;
A little homeless swallow clings to mine,
A spirit-bird—he looks for something higher
Than songs and odours ; pity and remorse
He claims—an elegy of words and tears :
He asks me why they swept him from his peers,
When wheeling gaily in his wondrous course ;
And now he comes, with trembling wings, to plead
For some brief record of his cruel fate ;
Some note of tuneful sorrow for the deed
Which struck him from the side of his dear mate.
Poor bird ! had I the Teian's melody,
Sweet as his dainty Ode thy dirge should be.

THE LAST SWEEP OF THE SCYTHE.

The year had rushed along through May and June,
And my own natal month, her goal to win ;
And now the fruitful sheaves were coming in;
The glow of August made the barren moon
As mellow as the corn-lands. One bright field,
Which to the southward sloped, enhancing all
The beauty of the view, was last to fall
Before the sweeping scythe. Its doom was sealed ;
I grieved to think how fleet and fugitive
Are all our joys, how near to change or harm :
And how that azure distance would outlive
Its golden foreground, losing half its charm !
But I remembered, ere I looked again,
That fallen corn is bread, and many a loss true gain.

HARVEST-HOME.

All day we watched th' unintermitt'd fume
Of clouds, but still there was no downward rush
Of rain ; then evening came and brought a flush
Of windy redness, in the place of gloom ;
None but sweet hues and pleasant airs remained ;
The dry light gust that swept the dancing sprays,
And a white moon, astir in rosy haze
Above our latest labours ; none complained
Of that sharp toil. The sheaves flew fast and thick
From fork to fork, to feed the growing rick ;
Each waved its farewell, as it took the leap ;
Some blest the God of harvest, some their luck ;
The horses' weary feet their thresholds struck,
And the hinds supt, and slept a happy sleep.

THE STORM—A HARVEST MEMORY.

The specialties of that dark hour of grief
On my retentive heart have prest their seal ;
Yes ! I remember even the spider's wheel,
Which stretched and lightened on the gusty leaf
Of that wild August morn ! The blasts were driven
Across the new-mown fields, fitful and brief,
And tossed the tresses of the barley-sheaf,
And rode the streaming willow into Heaven :
The features of the tempest, all and each,
I still recall, and shall thy routhful gaze
Not be remembered ? nor those winning ways
Which brought my soul within thy pity's reach ?
I keep the natural impress of the hour,
And shall thy loving kindness have less power ?

THE FIRST WEEK IN OCTOBER.

Once on an autumn day as I reposed
Beneath a noon-beam, pallid yet not dull,
The branch above my head dipt itself full
Of that white sunshine momently, and closed ;
While, ever and anon, the ashen keys
Dropt down beside the tarnished hollyhocks,
The scarlet crane's-bill, and the faded stocks,—
Flung from the shuffling leafage by the breeze.
How wistfully I marked the year's decay,
Forecasting all the dreary wind and rain ;
'Twas the last week the swallow would remain—
How jealously I watched his circling play !
A few brief hours, and he would dart away,
No more to turn upon himself again.

FROM HARVEST TO JANUARY.

The hay has long been built into the stack
And now the grain ; anon the hunter's moon
Shall wax and wane in cooler skies, and soon
Again re-orbed, speed on her wonted track,
To spend her snowy light upon the rack
Of dark November, while her brother Sun
Shall get up later for his eight-hours' run
In that cold section of the Zodiac :
Far from the Lion, from the Virgin far !
Then onward through the last dim month shall go
The two great lights, to where the kalendar
Splits the mid-winter ; and the feathery snow
Ushering another spring, with falling flakes
Shall nurse the soil for next year's scythes and rakes.

LAST YEAR'S HARVEST.

Since harvest passed from out this lonely gate,
Which strains and clatters now in winter's flaw—
With all the merry groups that stirred or sate
Among the red wheat, stemmed with amber straw,
How changed is all the scene ! changed by the law
Of death—and I a weary term must wait,
Till once again the seasons reinstate
The glory and the beauty which I saw !
'Twas here I watched the mighty landscape stretched
To the far hills, through green and azure grades ;
'Twas here I studied all its lights and shades ;
And from this field, one golden morn, I fetched
Some hues for those small tablets, where I paint
My sweetest thoughts, ere they wax cold and faint.

*THE STEAM THRESHING MACHINE**With the Straw Carrier.*

Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burned
At eve, while smoke and vapour filled the yard ;
The gloomy winter sky was dimly starred,
The fly-wheel with a mellow murmur turned ;
While, ever rising on its mystic stair
In the dim light, from secret chambers borne,
The straw of harvest, severed from the corn,
Climbed, and fell over, in the murky air.
I thought of mind and matter, will and law,
And then of him, who set his stately seal
Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
Of old-world husbandry : *I* could but feel
With what a rich precision *he* would draw
The endless ladder, and the booming wheel !

Continued.

Did any seer of ancient time forebode
This mighty engine, which we daily see
Accepting our full harvests, like a god,
With clouds about his shoulders,—it might be
Some poet-husbandman, some lord of verse,
Old Hesiod, or the wizard Mantuan
Who catalogued in rich hexameters
The Rake, the Roller, and the mystic Van :
Or else some priest of Ceres, it might seem,
Who witnessed, as he trod the silent fane,
The notes and anguries of coming change,
Of other ministrants in shrine and grange,
The sweating statue,—and her sacred wain
Low-booming with the prophecy of steam!

*NOVEMBER SUNSHINE AND THE HOUSE-
FLIES.*

When the dawn struck on Memnon, as they say,
The child of morning answered ; so the stroke
Of this warm sunshine on the room, awoke
To song those lesser children of the day,
The window-flies ; I watched each mazy track,
I saw them deftly treading the smooth pane,
Or, haply, flitting with prone wings and back,
To the near cornice, to return again.
Ah ! little ones ! your joy is brief and vain :
Full soon the brush shall sweep your tiny forms,
Supine and dumb, into the wind and rain ;
'Tis sad to be swept out into the storms,
'Twere sadder to revive, and cast about
For foothold, in that roaring world without !

THE DRUNKARD'S LAST MARKET.

The taper wastes within yon window-pane,
And the blind flutters, where his fevered hand
Has raised the sash, to cool his burning brain ;
But he has passed away from house and land.
Cheerly and proudly through the gusty dark
The red cock crows ! the new-dropt lambkin tries
His earliest voice in the home-field, while stark
And stiff, on his own bed, the drunkard lies ;
O'erdone by that steep ride, his weary horse
Poises his battered feet and cannot feed ;
From the near moorland hill, the brawling force
Calls loudly—but the dead man takes no heed ;
While Keeper howls his notice of alarm,
And thrills with awe the dusky mountain farm.

THE LATE PASTOR OF WOLDSBY EBRIORUM

A shepherd sleeps where this fair tombstone stands,
Who made on this wild hill his fixt abode—
Who grasped in love the drunkard's trembling hands
And touched his heavy heart with thoughts of God;
He taught his flock by deeds and words and books;
The peace of many a sobered hearth he shared:
And many a sottish aspect was prepared
By hope in death, to answer the bright looks
Of their upbearing angels! Bless his name,
Who purged your grandsires' lives, and still controls
Your own, and saves you from remorse and shame;
O happy race! to you in them he came!
O deep infolded blessing! which unrolls
From sire to son—a charter for your souls!

*ON THE ECLIPSE OF THE MOON OF
OCTOBER 1865.*

One little noise of life remained—I heard
The train pause in the distance, then rush by,
Brawling and hushing, like some busy fly
That murmurs and then settles ; nothing stirred
Beside. The shadow of our travelling earth
Hung on the silver moon, which mutely went
Through that grand process, without token sent,
Or any sign to call a gazer forth,
Had I not chanced to see ; dumb was the vault
Of heaven, and dumb the fields—no zephyr swept
The forest walks, or through the coppice crept ;
Nor other sound the stillness did assault,
Save that faint-brawling railway's move and halt ;
So perfect was the silence Nature kept.

*ON AN ANNULAR ECLIPSE OF THE SUN IN
A STORM.*

‘To-morrow is the great Eclipse,’ we said :
‘The moon shall be an island in the sun !’
Though, when we came to gaze, the rack went on
Tumultuously, and all our hopes betrayed ;
But, where the scud ran thinner, we perceived
Hustling along, a strange-compounded form,
Half glitter and half gloom—the sun aggrieved,
And the black moon, confederate with the storm
Against mankind. My next thought brought me ease :
Methought, ‘ A segment of yon hard dark sphere
Shall borrow light for us, and reappear,
Friendly as Hesper,—and, i’ th’ evening breeze,
Wander and flash behind the dusking trees,
Or guide the boatman on yon stormy mere.’

THE MOON AND SIN, AN ILLUSTRATION.

When the moon's edge grows dim, then blurred and rough,
And darkness quarries in her lessening orb,
She yields an image, true and stern enough,
Of all those crimes and sorrows, which absorb
Our hope and life ! The thievish shadow sits
On her smooth rim at first, like Adam's sin ;
But soon th' encroaching gloom its way doth win,
And with a stealth that never intermits,
Eats out her glory ; but the moon expands
Once more, and brightens to a perfect sphere,
A blessed restoration, full and clear ;
So Christ refills our waning world, and stands
For her lost light : O Saviour ever dear !
Soon shall Thy name be known throughout all lands.

ORION.

How oft I've watched thee from the garden croft,
In silence, when the busy day was done,
Shining with wondrous brilliancy aloft,
And flickering like a casement 'gainst the sun :
I've seen thee soar from out some snowy cloud,
Which held the frozen breath of land and sea,
Yet broke and severed as the wind grew loud—
But earth-bound winds could not dismember thee,
Nor shake thy frame of jewels ; I have guessed
At thy strange shape and function, haply felt
The charm of that old myth about thy belt
And sword ; but, most, my spirit was possest
By His great presence, Who is never far
From his light-bearers, whether man or star.

*FANATICISM, A NIGHT-SCENE IN THE
OPEN AIR.*

These sectaries deal in parodies of truth—
Their narrow-minded fancies, crude and mean,
Uttered with gestures wild and words uncouth
In nature's mighty presence, move our spleen,
When they should move our tears. The gale blew loud,
But still the raving and the rant were heard—
Just then I marked, how, from a flying cloud,
Orion swiftly drew his belt and sword,
As he would mount to higher heavens, and go
Still further from the earth ! how little dreamed
The hot fanatic, breathing flames and woe,
Of that ineffable contrast ! Stars that gleamed,
Free winds and fleecy drift, how pure they seemed,
How alien from the hearts that grovelled so !

MISSING THE METEORS, 1866.

A hint of rain—a touch of lazy doubt—
Sent me to bedward on that prime of nights,
When the air met and burst the aërolites,
Making the men stare and the children shout :
Why did no beam from all that rout and rush
Of darting meteors, pierce my drowsèd head ?
Strike on the portals of my sleep ? and flush
My spirit through mine eyelids, in the stead
Of that poor vapid dream ? My soul was pained,
My very soul, to have slept while others woke,
While little children their delight outspoke,
And in their eyes' small chambers entertained
Far motions of the Kosmos ! I mistook
The purport of that night—it had not rained.

Continued.

A LOOK-OUT FOR THIRTY YEARS.

Oh ! deaf to Science and her faithful words !
I counted on those fires of prophecy
No more than on some flight of midnight birds,
That pass, unheralded, with sudden cry,—
That never travelled under Humboldt's eye,
Nor owed themselves at Greenwich. Thirty years
Must pass ere such bright vision reappears,
And then I shall be dead or near to die ;
Or, should my life bridge over that great gap,
I cannot vouch for my decrepit self,
With feeble knees, weak eyes, and velvet cap,
And all my forethought laid upon the shelf ;
But some good youth, or maid, or rosy elf,
Shall set my thin face heavenward, it may hap.

THE MOORLAND TREE IN THE GARDEN.

Brought from afar, but with no studied choice,
And roughly carted, as thou cam'st to hand,
By the rude peasant,—how we all rejoice
To see thee grown so beautiful and grand !

In thy old site thou mightst have still been poor
And meagre—or, at best, the summer breeze
Had set thee floating on the lonely moor,
No human hearts to teach, no eyes to please :
Kind Heaven foreknew the boon we all received ;
For us, the moral of thy drooping boughs—
And, for thyself, how different is thy lot !

From the bare heath, skirted by distant ploughs,
To all this dear home-honour thou hast got ;
Thou good man's model, lowly though full-leaved !

*IN AND OUT OF THE PINE-WOOD.**A Simile.*

Beyond the pine-wood all looked bright and clear—
And, ever by our side, as on we drove,
The star of eve ran glimpering through the grove,
To meet us in the open atmosphere ;
As some fair thought, of heavenly light and force,
Will move and flash behind a transient screen
Of dim expression, glittering in its course
Through many loop-holes, till its face is seen ;
Some thoughts ne'er pass beyond their close confines ;
Theirs is the little taper's homely lot,
A woodside glimmer, distanced and forgot—
Whose trivial gleam, that twinkles more than shines,
Is left behind to die among the pines ;
Our stars are carried out, and vanish not !

SILENT PRAISE.

O Thou, Who givest to the woodland wren
A throat, like to a little light-set door,
That opens to his early joy--to men
The spirit of true worship, which is more
Than all this sylvan rapture : what a world
Is Thine, O Lord !—skies, earth, men, beasts, and birds !
The poet and the painter have unfurled
Their love and wonder in descriptive words,
Or sprightly hues—each, after his own sort,
Emptying his heart of its delicious hoards ;
But all self-conscious blazonry comes short
Of that still sense no active mood affords,
Ere yet the brush is dipt, or uttered phrase
Hath breathed abroad those folds of silent praise !

A FOREST SUNSET.

Once on a glorious and resplendent eve,
Through copse and underwood my path I broke ;
The shining sun was on the point to leave,
And flashed through thickets of the pine and oak ;
'Twas sweet to see those vari-coloured rays
Come pouring through the coverts silently ;
Through little fluttering loop-holes, set ablaze,
Or blinkt, at will, by shifting of an eye ;
That evening's charms were rich and manifold,
Beyond the reach of my best utterance ;
'Twas some kind Providence, no common chance,
Which made mine eyes wink at those wells of gold
Sprung in the glooming leafage, while the dance
Of wilding-boughs was pleasant to behold.

*WRITTEN AT THE WOOD-SALE OF MESSRS.
BLANK AND CO. NON-RESIDENT PROPRIETORS.*

Shall not the phantom-axe, with viewless strokes,
The quiet purlieus of your traffic vex?
And the grim voice of all these aged oaks
Go storming o'er your ledgers, to perplex
Your clerks with sylvan horror? This fair haunt
Of light and shadow, and divine repose,
Low-fallen at last beneath your ruthless blows,
Waits its last shame, the hammer. Do not vaunt
The pelf your ravage brings you; for the ban
Of all the woods is on you! you have spared
No shelter for the dreams of god or man—
Who stirred the wood-god's bile, what risks he ran
Of old! ay, even the heedless swain, who dared
To tune his pipe across the nose of Pan!

*THE NEEDLES' LIGHTHOUSE FROM
KEYHAVEN, HAMPSHIRE.*

The downs and tender-tinted cliffs are lost,
And nothing but the guardian fire remains—
That crimson-headed tower on the rough coast,
Whose steady lustre ceases not, nor wanes,
Till sunrise from the east reveals to us
The mighty Vectian wold, and tawny tract
Of shingle, seen through bowers of arbutus,
Like some fair corn-field, mellow and compact.
How that deep glow the deepening gloom attests !
How much is by that noble lighthouse taught !
Mine eye rests on it, as the spirit rests
In sorrow, on some holy, ardent thought,
The sole beam in our darkness ! Those who dwell
Near these great beacons are instructed well.

DANGER—A PERSONIFICATION.

Grim Danger left his home in chartless wastes
To count his chances in our narrow seas ;
What anchors he might drag, what noble masts
Disable, on the rock or in the breeze :
And while he rode the waves from place to place
Like Hermes, his rude eyes the lighthouse met ;
And, as it seemed to scan his heathen face
At leisure, he was dazzled and beset.
Morn dawn'd—in haste he bade the winds prepare
To wreck at eve th' outgoing fisherman :
But Fitzroy heard—the storm-drum rose in air,
And not a coble but had changed its plan ;
While in his ears the spit-buoys swung their bells,
He could not dodge our English sentinels.

A FAREWELL TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

Silent I gazed upon our foaming wake,
And silent on the Island hills I gazed,
As up the ebbing stream we bore, to make
Our harbour, while the West athwart us blazed.
Keen were my thoughts : my memory wandered back
To those fair shores—the Needles and the Downs—
The happy woodlands and the little towns—
For every day a new and pleasant track ;
How grieved was I those social walks to leave,
Those friendly hands ! The shadow of our mast
And sail ran sadly o'er the fruitless ooze
At sunset, as between the banks we passed
Of that tide-fallen river, speeding fast
To land, and further from those fond adieus.

THE WHITE HORSE OF WESTBURY.

As from the Dorset shore I travelled home,
I saw the charger of the Wiltshire wold ;
A far-seen figure, stately to behold,
Whose groom the shepherd is, the hoe his comb ;
His wizard-spell even sober daylight owned ;
That night I dreamed him into living will ;
He neighed—and, straight, the chalk poured down
 the hill ;
He shook himself, and all beneath was stoned ;
Hengist and Horsa shouted o'er my sleep,
Like fierce Achilles ; while that storm-blanch'd hor
Sprang to the van of all the Saxon force,
And pushed the Britons to the Western deep ;
Then, dream-wise, as it were a thing of course,
He floated upwards, and regained the steep.

BEAU NASH.

‘Alas, alas !’ said Moschus in his woe,
When Bion died, ‘he comes not back to sing
His songs, nor other lip his notes can bring
From the same pipe.’ So Bath regrets her Beau :
Her waters bubble upward without stop,
Each market sees her flowers and fruits replaced ;
Potherbs and roses—plums of every taste—
And peaches, brimming with ambrosial slop ;
All this repeats itself, a constant birth ;
But mighty Nash, strong-willed and bold and shrewd,
Who awed and charmed that modish multitude,
Hath found no heirs, and to the hollow earth
Bequeaths his fame ; for none his place may take ;—
Long have such honours slept, and may not reawake !

*A PHOTOGRAPH ON THE RED GOLD.**Jersey, 1867.*

About the knoll the airs blew fresh and brisk,
And, musing as I sat, I held my watch
Upon my open palm ; its smooth bright disk
Was uppermost, and so it came to catch,
And dwarf, the figure of a waving tree,
Backed by the West. A tiny sunshine peeped
About a tiny elm,—and both were steeped
In royal metal, flaming ruddily :
How lovely was that vision to behold !
How passing sweet that fairy miniature,
That streamed and flickered o'er the burning gold !
God of small things and great ! do Thou ensure
Thy gift of sight, till all my days are told,
Bless all its bliss, and keep its pleasures pure !

ON BOARD A JERSEY STEAMER.

A Midsummer Sunrise.

Long had I watched, and, summoned by the ray
From those small window-lights, that dipt and bowed
Down to the glimsping waters, made my way
On deck, while the sun rose without a cloud ;
The brazen plates upon the steerage-wheel
Flashed forth ; the steersman's face came full in view ;
Found at his post, he met the bright appeal
Of morning-tide, and answered 'I am true !'
Then back again into my berth I crept,
And lay awhile, at gaze, with upward eye,
Where gleams and shadows from the ocean swept,
And flickered wildly o'er the dreaming fly,
That clung to the low ceiling. Then I slept
And woke, and sought once more the sea and sky.

VIE DE JÉSUS.

On hearing of a forthcoming cheap edition.

A book of pleasant phrase, but narrow span
Of thought, is coming, in its cheapest guise,
Home to the hearths of each poor artisan
Throughout unhappy France—to make him wise
With a false gospel ; and that, so enticed,
And flushed with petty raptures, he may give
His horny hands to this Parisian Christ,
Who lacks the strength to lift them ! Shall it live,
This pleasant book ? Oh ! join with one accord !
Reject the lore, which—void of spleen or joke,
And in wild earnest—cuts down at one stroke
The measure of the stature of our Lord,
To this unscriptural pigmy ! nor invoke
A frail young saint, in lieu of God the Word !

*POOR HODGE AND THE REV. SANS FOY.**Christmas.*

Poor Hodge prays hard—the wise man smiles embowered ; — — —
The priest-philosopher, who lurks within
That screen of Christmas hollies, though empowered
For other ends, takes pay for conscious sin :
What does the white-robed hireling, simpering thus
At his poor neighbour's spiritual desire ?
Of all that honest faith incredulous,
The tainted vestal mocks the holy fire !
He lives beneath that little twinkling creed
Which counts for light at Tübingen ; his list
Of Christian sympathies is brief indeed :
And yet he speaks right loyally for Christ !
Ah ! traitorous lips ! so Judas falsely kissed
The Truth, with thirty pieces for his meed.

PRAY, THINK, AND STRIVE!

Wouldst thou be safe from those, who plead or sneer
Against the virtue of our ancient frame
Of thought, and noble models ; wouldst thou claim
A full exemption from this modern Fear,
Pray, think, and strive ! with God's good Book for guide
Be proof against the sweet word or the scoff :
A light-laid faith will soon be lifted off
Into some scorner's nostrils, when his pride
Smells at your simple creed in free disdain ;
Nor let the smile of gentler critics fix
Their spells upon you—they who deftly mix
Some Christian truth with errors black as Styx ;
Charming to sleep the conscience and the brain,
Without the spleen of coarser heretics.

[*The following Sonnets were Published in 1830, and are now Republished with a few Alterations.*]

. *THE AEOLIAN HARP.*

O take that airy harp from out the gale,
Its troubles call from such a distant bourne,
Now that the wind has wooed it to its tale
Of bygone bliss, that never can return ;
Hark ! with what dreamy sadness it is swelling !
How sweet it falls, unwinding from the breeze !
Disordered music, deep and tear-compelling,
Like siren-voices pealing o'er the seas.
Nay, take it not, for now my tears are stealing,
But when it brake upon my mirthful hour,
And spake to joy of sorrow past the healing,
I shrank beneath the soft subduing power ;
Nay, take it not ; replace it by my bower—
The soul can thrill with no diviner feeling.

THE OCEAN.

The Ocean, at the bidding of the Moon,
For ever changes with his restless tide ;
Flung shoreward now, to be regathered soon
With kingly pauses of reluctant pride,
And semblance of return. Anon from home
He issues forth again, high ridged and free ;
The seething hiss of his tumultuous foam,
Like armies whispering where great echoes be !
Oh ! leave me here upon this beach to rove,
Mute listener to that sound so grand and lone—
A glorious sound, deep-drawn and strongly thrown,
And reaching those on mountain heights above ;
To British ears, as who shall scorn to own,
A tutelar fond voice, a Saviour-tone of love !

A SUMMER TWILIGHT.

It is a Summer twilight, balmy-sweet,
A twilight brightened by an infant moon,
Fraught with the fairest light of middle June ;
The lonely garden echoes to my feet,
And hark ! O hear I not the gentle dews,
Fretting the silent forest in his sleep ?
Or does the stir of housing insects creep
Thus faintly on mine ear ? Day's many hues
Waned with the paling light and are no more,
And none but reptile pinions beat the air :
The bat is hunting softly by my door,
And, noiseless as the snow-flake, leaves his lair ;
O'er the still copses flitting here and there,
Wheeling the self-same circuit o'er and o'er.

THE KISS OF BETROTHAL.

When lovers' lips from kissing disunite
With sound as soft as mellow fruitage breaking,
They loathe to leave what was so sweet in taking,
So fraught with breathless magical delight ;
The scent of flowers is long before it fade,
Long dwells upon the gale the Vesper-tone,
Far floats the wake the lightest skiff has made,
The closest kiss, when once imprest, is gone ;
What marvel, then, that each so closely kisseth ?
Sweet is the fourfold touch, the living seal—
What marvel, then, with sorrow each dismisseth
This thrilling pledge of all they hope and feel ?
While on their lingering steps the shadows steal,
And each true heart beats as the other wisheth.

AN ENGLISH CHURCH.

The bells awake the Sabbath's choral prime,
By breezes softened to a harp-like tone ;
Lowly and sweetly from the distance thrown,
They greet the ear with jubilee and chime ;
Follow the sound, and it will lead thee on
Into an English church, the home of Prayer,
For who shall say she is not lovelier there,
Than in all other fanes beneath the Sun ?
There, if thou doubttest, may it not impart
Fresh hope, to learn that others' hope is sure ?
There, duly as the merchant to the mart,
Come aged men, whom daily death makes fewer ;
There all the spirit of a Christian heart
Is bodied forth in gentle rites and pure.

A FOREST LAKE.

O Lake of sylvan shore ! when gentle Spring
Slopes down upon thee from the mountain side,
When birds begin to build and brood and sing ;
Or, in maturer season, when the pied
And fragrant turf is thronged with blossoms rare ;
In the frore sweetness of the breathing morn,
When the loud echoes of the herdsman's horn
Do sally forth upon the silent air
Of thy thick forestry, may I be there,
While the wood waits to see its phantom born
At clearing twilight, in thy glassy breast ;
Or, when cool eve is busy, on thy shores,
With trails of purple shadow from the West,
Or dusking in the wake of tardy oars.

JOY CAME FROM HEAVEN.

Joy came from heaven, for men were mad with pain,
And sought a mansion on this earth below ;
He could not settle on the wrinkled brow,
Close-gathered to repel him ; and, again,
Upon the cheek he sought repose in vain ;
He found that pillow all too chill and cold,
Where sorrow's streams might float him from his hold,
Caught sleeping in their channel. Th' eye would fain
Receive the stranger on her slippery sphere,
Where life had purer effluence than elsewhere,
But where no barrier might forbid the tear
To sweep it, when it listed. So not there
He staid, nor could the lips his couch prepare,
Shifting untenably from smile to sneer.

THE RAINBOW.

Hung on the shower that fronts the golden West,
The Rainbow bursts like magic on mine eyes !
In hues of ancient promise there imprest ;
Frail in its date, eternal in its guise ;
The vision is so lovely, that I feel
My heart imbued with beauty like its own,
And taking an indissoluble seal
From what is here a moment, and is gone ;
It lies so soft on the full-breasted storm,
New-born o' the middle air, and dewy-pure,
And tricked in Nature's choicest garniture ;
What can be seen of lovelier dye or form ?
While all the groves assume a ghastly stain,
Caught from the leaden rack and shining rain !

*COLLISION OF THE AYR AND COMET
STEAMBOATS.*

Vessel of Britain ! proudly wert thou going,
Thy strong foundations seated in the sea,
Yet moving like the wind. The hearts were glowing
The steps were light, the melody was free,
That ushered in that midnight jollity ;
Sad was the shock, and fearful was the doom,
That quenched those happy hearts so suddenly ;
And sad it was to see their kindred come
In quest o' the dearest brow, with hushing breath ;
Oh ! that those blessed days should ne'er return,
When Christ was ready at the gates of Death
To bid them back, whom widowed souls would mourn !
To make the parents' hope revive and burn,
' Why sorrowest thou ? thy child but slumbereth.'

SILKWORMS AND SPIDERS.

The worm long fosters his transforming sleep,
But claims th' inalienable life again,
Which, tho' it be but one, yet seemeth twain,
The trance between is all so deadly deep ;
The careful spider spreads before his lair
The web he gathers near his filmy heart,
Without the throe of any vital smart,
And of his entrails makes a useful snare :
In both a mighty mystery resides,
A truth, on whose development they thrive ;
One for the cravings of his life provides,
One weaves himself another way to live ;
To search the secret is beyond our lore,
And we must rest, till God shall tell us more.

PERSEVERANCE.

On, on, in firm progression, sure and slow,
More scorning hindrance, as ye meet it more ;
Surmounting what ye cannot thorough go,
And forcing what ye fail in climbing o'er ;
Soon shall ye gaze upon the bliss attained,
And worth attainment fourfold as severe ;
The glorious meed for zealous souls ordained,
Shall shine upon you, palpable and clear ;
Then when the starry coronal of Fame
Shall gird your brows, all-perdurably bright ;
When ye have seen the solitary flame,
That burns upon the solitary height,
Ye will not, then, your daily cares misname
As toil—well spent, for rapture to requite !

MARTIAL ARDOUR IN AGE.

Oh ! if ye marvel that mine eye doth glow
Now every pulse of fervid youth is lost,
Ye never heard the kingly trumpets blow,
Nor felt the fieldward stirring of a host ;
Nor how the bayonet assures the hand
That it can never fail, while Death doth stand
Amid the thunders of the reckless drum,
And the loud scorn of fifes, ashamed and dumb !
Nor, when the noble revel dies away,
How proud they lie upon the stainèd mould,
A presence, too majestic to gainsay,
Of lordly martial bearing, mute and cold,
Which Honour knows o' th' instant ! such as lay
On Morat late, or Marathon of old !

AUTUMN.

The softest shadows mantle o'er his form,
And the curved sickle in his grasp appears,
Glooming and brightening; while a wreath of ears
Circles his shallow brow, which th' angry storm
Gusts down at intervals; about him stray
The volant sweets o' the trailing mignonette,
And odours vague, that haunt the year's decay;
The crush of leaves is heard beneath his feet,
Mixt, as he onward goes, with softer sound,
As tho' his heel were sinking into snows:
Full soon a sadder landscape opens round,
With, here and there, a latter-flowering rose,
Child of the Summer hours, though blooming here
Far down the vista of the fading year.

A CALM EVENING.

Seest thou how clear and sharp the shadows are
Among the cattle on yon ridgy field,
So softly glooming amid light so fair?
Yon mighty trees no blast may dare to wield ;
The things that own most motion and most sound
Are tranced and silent ; all is mute around.
Where is the wind ? Not in yon glassy sky,
Not in the trees,—what deep tranquillity
Has hushed his voice ? Methinks so calm should fall
The eve before the great millennial morn,
Before the first of those high days is born,
Whose placid tenor shall be peace to all.
Sink deeply in my heart, surpassing scene !
And be thy memory clear, for I would live therein !

ON A GENIUS OF LOWLY ESTATE.

Where may not souls be found to greatness true?
Born with no loftier hope or prouder aim
Than lineage lowly, like his own, could claim,
How did he guess at his immortal due?
How was the fire first smitten from the steel?
When came that strange enforcement of his will?
How did his mind, 'mid poverty and ill,
Find leisure to endow itself so well?
Methinks, one summer's eve, he first did hear
The rise and fall of music in his heart;
Wild notes, a-dropping downward without art
To a sweet close, that fell upon his ear
Unutterably soft, and yet most clear,
And seeming from his bosom's depth to start.

ON STARTLING SOME PIGEONS.

A hundred wings are dropt as soft as one,
Now ye are lighted ! Pleasing to my sight
The fearful circle of your wondering flight,
Rapid and loud, and drawing homeward soon ;
And then, the sober chiding of your tone,
As there ye sit, from your own roofs arraigning
My trespass on your haunts, so boldly done,
Sounds like a solemn and a just complaining :
O happy, happy race ! for though there clings
A feeble fear about your timid clan,
Yet are ye blest ! with not a thought that brings
Disquietude,—while proud and sorrowing man,
An eagle, weary of his mighty wings,
With anxious inquest fills his mortal span !

THE BUTTERFLY.

Alexis seized a prisoned butterfly
To set it free, on a bright morn of May ;
But the kind touch brushed half the tints away
From the rich wings, though handled tenderly.
Then spake he out to bashful Isabel,—
‘ Behold sweet Nature’s venturous faith ! and say,
Why thou dost aye refuse thy heart to stay
On mine, that is so fond and loves so well ?
Is beauty trusted to the morning dews ?
And to the butterfly’s mischanceful wing ?
To the dissolving cloud in rainbow hues ?
To the frail tenure of an early spring,
In blossoms and in dyes ? And must I lose
Claim to such trust,—all Nature’s underling ? ’

ON A PICTURE OF THE FATES.

Ye dull and loathy sisterhood forlorn !
Why did the fabling soul of ancient song
Build up a falsehood of such dreary scorn,
As that to you our being should belong ?
Likening a life that feels so much of heaven,
And so divinely sensible of joy,
To a frail thread at your cold mandate riven,
For hands so pale to weave and to destroy ?
Soul-deadening lore ! that had long since its birth,
When the strange perjury of ancient creed
Jarred in full discord,—now our hearts are freed,
And solemn Reason dictates to the Earth,
Since that most perfect Law shone forth to bless,
That hath no peer in moral loveliness.

*DECADENCE OF GREECE, 1830.**To —*

Young tourist to the land whose hope has passed !
Fain would I seek with thee those shores sublime
That hear no promise from the lips of Time,
Of hours so bright as those He overcast !
There is that Athens ! still in ruin fair,
Though long gone by her intellectual reign ;
Arcadia waits in patient beauty there,
To hear her lingering shepherd's voice again !
Too oft our travellers ply a clumsy art
Here in the West ! No faithful light they lend ;
But keep the dues of Fame so ill apart,
That the great claims of mount and valley blend ;
Misname the passes with incurious ease,
And mix the records of the plashing seas !

A BIRTHDAY.

The summer tide has brought my natal hour:
Comes it to usher days of bliss or bane?
To set a seal on grief? or to empower
With tenfold strength the tyranny of pain?
Oh! might we summon back by charm of art,
Those days of bloodless food and placid sleep,
Which crept, exhaling from the mother's heart,
So holy, dreamless, innocent, and deep!
We leave the womb to slumber on the breast,
We leave the breast to climb upon the knee,
Soon beckoned off by dolour and unrest,
Till our first sympathies are hard to see,
Which passion's heavy overgrowths invest,
Scarce disentwined by keen Philosophy!

TO —

Thought travels past thee with intenser glow,
And nobler visions burn upon thine eye,
Than other souls e'er knew of, or can know ;
Massing delicious thought, and fancies high,
From hour to hour, thy spirit teems with joy,
Nor seldom with unrest ; for, when the mind
O'er many themes keeps survey unconfined,
Death will be one ;—'tis surely sad to die !

Placed at the limit of all mortal being,
The mute unquestionable shadow stands,
Whose simple mandate binds the giant's hands
Helpless, and seals the keenest eye from seeing !

We own his power, but know not whence he came ;
We call him Death—he telleth not his name !

*ON SEEING A CHILD BLUSH ON HIS FIRST
VIEW OF A CORPSE.*

'Tis good our earliest sympathies to trace !
And I would muse upon a little thing ;
What brought the blush into that infant's face
When first confronted with the rueful king ?
He boldly came—what made his courage less ?
A signal for the heart to beat less free
Are all imperial presences, and he
Was awed by Death's consummate kingliness ;
A strange bewildered look of shame he wore ;
'Twas the first mortal hint that crossed the lad ;
He feared the stranger, though he knew no more,
Surmising and surprised, but, most, afraid,
As Crusoe, wandering on the desert shore,
Saw but an alien footmark and was sad !

O GOD, IMPART THY BLESSING TO MY CRIES.

O God, impart Thy blessing to my cries !
I trust but faintly, and I daily err ;
The waters of my heart are oft astir,
An angel's there ! and yet I cannot rise !
Ah ! would my Lord were here amongst us still,
Proffering His bosom to His servant's brow ;
Too oft that holy life comes o'er us now,
Like twilight echoes from a distant hill ;
We long for His pure looks and words sublime ;
His lowly-lofty innocence and grace ;
The talk sweet-toned, and blessing all the time ;
The mountain sermon and the routhful gaze ;
The cheerly credence gathered from His face ;
His voice in village-groups at eve or prime !

NOTES.

NEHEMIAH'S NIGHT RIDE. *Page 7.*

Nehemiah ii.

WOLF AND THE CASKET. *Page 11, lines 13 and 14.*

Μετὰ δέ σφισιν Ὁσσα δεδήει,
Ὀτρύνονται οἴναι, Διὸς ἄγγελος.—*Iliad.* ii. 93, 94.

TO A LITTLE CHILD WHO ASKED FOR A LAUREL CROWN.—A RECANTATION. *Page 42, line 1.*

I have substituted our garden laurel (*Lauro cerasus*) for the classical *Laurus*, or bay. ‘Heritage of light’ would scarcely apply to the latter.

THE PLEA OF THE SHOT SWALLOW. *Page 55, line 2.*

ἐπ' αὐτῷ
Τῷ βαρβίτῳ καθεύδω.

See Anac. Eīs περιστέραν.

THE STEAM THRESHING MACHINE. *Page 63.*

Lines 3 and 4 :—

Nube candentes humeros amietus.—*Hor.*

Line 8 :—

Mystica vannus Iacchi.—*Virgil, Georgics.*

MISSING THE METEORS, 1866.—A LOOK-OUT FOR THIRTY YEARS. *Page 73.*

Thirty-three, I believe, is the accurate number, dating from 1866.

WRITTEN AT THE WOOD-SALE OF MESSRS. BLANK AND CO., NON-RESIDENT PROPRIETORS. *Page 78.*

The last four lines of the sonnet allude to these of the Idyll:—

Οὐ θέμις, ὡς ποιμὰν, τὸ μεσαμβρινὸν, οὐ θέμις ἄμμιν
Συρίσδεν· τὸν Πάνα δεῖοίκαμες, ἢ γὰρ ἀπ' ἄγρας
Τατίκα κεκμακῶς ἀμπαύεται· ἐντὶ γε πικρός,
Καί οἱ ἀεὶ δριμεῖα χολὰ ποτὶ ρινὶ κάθηται.

THEOCR. Εἰδύλλιον α'.

BEAU NASH. *Page 83.*

Αἲ αὖ, ταὶ μαλάχαι μὲν, ἐπὰν κατὰ κάπον ὅλωνται,
*Η τὰ χλωρὰ σέλινα, τό τ' εὐθαλὲς οὖλον ἄνηθον,
*Τστερον αὖ ζώοντι καὶ εἰς ἔτος ἄλλο φύοντι.
*Άμμες δ' οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ καρτεροὶ ἢ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες
*Οππότε πρᾶτα θάνωμες, ἀνάκοοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλᾳ
Εῦδομες εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονα νήγρετον ὕπνον.

MOSCHI *Epitaph. Bionis.*

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